



## CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS DATA SUMMARY

REPORT REGISTER NO. DS98-07003  
(July 1998)

Differences in Death Rates  
Among California's  
Race/Ethnic Populations  
1996

### ***Mission of the Department***

*The mission of the Department of Health Services is to protect and improve the health of all Californians. One of the Department's goals in meeting its mission is to "close the gaps in health status and access to care among the State's diverse population subgroups".*

*This report presents data on one indicator of the health status of Californians – age-adjusted death rates – and how California's race/ethnic subgroups differ on this indicator.*

### **California's 1996 Population**

<b>Total</b>	<b>32,383,811</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>17,131,672</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>9,330,740</b>
<b>Asian/Pac</b>	<b>3,452,463</b>
<b>Black</b>	<b>2,275,401</b>
<b>Am Indian</b>	<b>193,535</b>

- ***California's race/ethnic populations exhibit significant differences in their age-adjusted death rates***
- ***Blacks have significantly higher rates for most causes of death***
- ***Rates are generally lower for Hispanics and Asian/Pacific Islanders***

### **Number of Deaths**

In 1996, there were 222,308 deaths among California's residents. Whites accounted for nearly three-fourths of these deaths (165,040), with Hispanics accounting for 11.8 percent (26,128), Blacks 8.1 percent (17,925), Asian/Pacific Islanders 5.6 percent (12,475), and American Indians 0.3 percent (740).

### **Crude Death Rates**

For the population as a whole, the rate of death per 100,000 population was 686.5, or roughly one death for every 145 residents. California's 1996 death rate was significantly lower than the United States death rate of 875.4.

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## Age-Adjusted Death Rates

For purposes of comparing death rates across different race/ethnic groups, it is preferable to use age-adjusted death rates. Comparing crude death rates could be misleading if one race/ethnic group has a disproportionately older population since most deaths occur among older persons. Age-adjusted death rates eliminate the age differences that exist among population subgroups and allow a more direct comparison of their varying risks of mortality.

As shown below, Blacks had significantly higher age-adjusted death rates, 2.5 times the rate of Asian/Pacific Islanders, over twice that of Hispanics, and over 1.5 times the rate of Whites.

	<u>Rate</u>
<b>Black</b>	<b>716.1</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>452.6</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>338.6</b>
<b>Asian/PI</b>	<b>288.5</b>

The significantly higher death rates for Blacks extended to both males and females.

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
<b>Black</b>	<b>905.6</b>	<b>559.8</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>561.4</b>	<b>359.8</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>429.9</b>	<b>253.8</b>
<b>Asian/PI</b>	<b>370.4</b>	<b>220.5</b>

Asian/Pacific Islanders had significantly lower death rates than any other race/ethnic group. Hispanics, though not as low as Asian/Pacific Islanders, experienced lower death rates than either Whites or Blacks for both males and females.

## Causes of Death

Significant differences in age-adjusted death rates by race/ethnicity were also found among the leading causes of death. As shown in **Table 1**, Blacks had the highest age-adjusted death rate for eight of the eleven leading causes of death. Whites had the highest rate for two causes, and Hispanics one cause. On the other hand, Asian/Pacific Islanders and Hispanics each had the lowest rates for five of the leading causes.

A further breakdown of the leading causes of death by race/ethnicity and sex is shown in **Table 2**. For both males and females, Blacks had the highest age-adjusted death rates for all but two of the leading causes of death. With two exceptions, male and female Hispanics or Asian/Pacific Islanders had the lowest death rates for each cause of death.

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Age-adjusted death rates are the number of deaths per 100,000 population. They were calculated using the 1940 United States standard million population. The rates represent California's resident population.

Asian/Pacific Islander, White, and Black exclude Hispanic ethnicity. Hispanic includes any race group. White includes "Other" and "Unknown".

Due to the miscoding of race/ethnicity on death certificates for American Indians, detailed statistics for American Indians were excluded from this report.

References to "significant" differences between rates were tested at  $p < 0.5$ .

Death data were derived from the Department of Health Services death records; population estimates used in calculating rates came from the Department of Finance.

TABLE 1  
AGE-ADJUSTED DEATH RATES BY RACE/ETHNICITY  
LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH  
CALIFORNIA, 1996  
(By Place of Residence)

CAUSE OF DEATH	NINTH REVISION ICD CODE	TOTAL		RACE/ETHNICITY			
		NUMBER	RATE	ASIAN/PI	BLACK	HISPANIC	WHITE
ALL CAUSES	001-799, E800-E999	222,308	438.6	288.5	<b>716.1</b>	338.6	452.6
DISEASES OF THE HEART	390-398, 402, 404-429	67,676	114.6	70.5	<b>193.6</b>	80.4	120.5
MALIGNANT NEOPLASMS	140-208	50,904	112.2	81.6	<b>161.2</b>	72.5	121.3
CEREBROVASCULAR DISEASE	430-438	16,481	26.0	27.9	<b>44.9</b>	21.0	24.8
CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE AND ALLIED CONDITIONS	490-496	11,373	20.8	10.6	23.5	6.9	<b>24.6</b>
PNEUMONIA AND INFLUENZA	480-487	11,134	15.8	11.6	<b>20.6</b>	11.0	16.7
UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES	E-800-949	9,217	25.9	15.2	<b>34.3</b>	27.0	26.2
DIABETES	250	5,380	11.4	9.2	<b>28.3</b>	17.0	9.2
ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME	042-044	4,207	12.1	2.7	<b>35.9</b>	10.6	11.7
CHRONIC LIVER DISEASE AND CIRRHOSIS	571	3,501	9.4	3.4	10.3	<b>14.3</b>	8.9
SUICIDE	E950-959	3,408	9.8	5.7	6.7	5.4	<b>12.6</b>
HOMICIDE	E960-969	3,007	10.2	5.3	<b>36.3</b>	14.7	4.3
ALL OTHER CAUSES	Residual	36,020	-	-	-	-	-

Note: **Indicates highest death rate for each cause of death**

Rates are per 100,000 population, using the 1940 United States standard million population.

Asian/Pacific Islander, White, and Black exclude Hispanic ethnicity. Hispanic includes any race group. White includes "Other" and "Unknown".

Source: State of California, Department of Finance, 1970-1996 Race/Ethnic Population Estimates by County with Age and Sex Detail, January 1998.

State of California, Department of Health Services, Death Records.

TABLE 2  
AGE-ADJUSTED DEATH RATES BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND SEX  
LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH  
CALIFORNIA, 1996  
(By Place of Residence)

CAUSE OF DEATH	NINTH REVISION ICD CODE	ASIAN/PI		BLACK		HISPANIC		WHITE	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
ALL CAUSES	001-799, E800-E999	370.4	220.5	<b>905.6</b>	<b>559.8</b>	429.9	253.8	561.4	359.8
DISEASES OF THE HEART	390-398, 402, 404-429	97.3	48.7	<b>239.5</b>	<b>157.5</b>	103.3	61.0	160.3	87.3
MALIGNANT NEOPLASMS	140-208	99.3	67.9	<b>200.6</b>	<b>134.5</b>	82.8	65.6	137.3	110.5
CEREBROVASCULAR DISEASE	430-438	30.6	25.7	<b>51.1</b>	<b>40.4</b>	23.2	19.0	26.1	23.5
CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE AND ALLIED CONDITIONS	490-496	16.7	5.8	<b>29.2</b>	19.5	8.7	5.7	27.7	<b>22.8</b>
PNEUMONIA AND INFLUENZA	480-487	15.7	8.4	<b>27.5</b>	<b>15.7</b>	13.6	9.2	20.1	14.4
UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES	E-800-949	19.6	10.9	<b>49.2</b>	<b>20.7</b>	40.5	12.8	37.3	15.1
DIABETES	250	11.1	7.6	<b>27.9</b>	<b>28.9</b>	18.0	16.1	10.7	8.0
ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME	042-044	5.1	0.5	<b>62.2</b>	<b>11.4</b>	18.3	2.3	21.7	1.4
CHRONIC LIVER DISEASE AND CIRRHOSIS	571	4.7	2.2	13.4	<b>7.6</b>	<b>21.7</b>	7.1	12.1	5.9
SUICIDE	E950-959	8.0	3.3	10.6	3.0	8.8	1.8	<b>19.8</b>	<b>5.7</b>
HOMICIDE	E960-969	8.4	2.2	<b>60.0</b>	<b>11.4</b>	25.3	3.0	6.2	2.3

Note: **Indicates highest death rate for each sex and cause of death**

Rates are per 100,000 population, using the 1940 United States standard million population.

Asian/Pacific Islander, White, and Black exclude Hispanic ethnicity. Hispanic includes any race group. White includes "Other" and "Unknown".

Source: State of California, Department of Finance, 1970-1996 Race/Ethnic Population Estimates by County with Age and Sex Detail, January 1998.

State of California, Department of Health Services, Death Records.